

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
Center for Consumer Information & Insurance Oversight
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SUMMARY REPORT ON PERMANENT RISK ADJUSTMENT TRANSFERS FOR THE 2017 BENEFIT YEAR

Released: July 9, 2018

II. Background

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act established a permanent risk adjustment program (in section 1343), one of three premium stabilization programs, to provide payments to health insurance issuers that cover higher-cost and higher-risk populations to more evenly spread the financial risk borne by issuers and help stabilize premiums. This report reflects the final estimated results of the risk adjustment program for the 2017 benefit year, the fourth year this program has operated.

The risk adjustment program provides payments to health insurance issuers that attract high risk enrollees, such as those with chronic conditions, reduces the incentives for issuers to avoid those enrollees, and lessens the potential influence of risk selection on the premiums that plans charge. The risk adjustment program therefore is designed to support plans offering a wide range of benefit designs that are available to consumers at an affordable premium.

As described in the HHS Notice of Benefit and Payment Parameters for 2014 Final Rule (78 Fed. Reg. 15409), the risk adjustment methodology developed by HHS is based on the premise that premiums should reflect the differences in plan benefits, quality, and efficiency – not the health status of the enrolled population. The HHS-operated risk adjustment methodology determines each plan's risk adjustment transfer amount based on the actuarial risk of enrollees, the actuarial value of coverage, utilization and the cost of doing business in local rating areas, and the effect of different cost-sharing levels on utilization. This methodology, which HHS applied in 50 states and the District of Columbia for the 2017 benefit year, transfers funds from plans with low risk enrollees to plans with high risk enrollees.

We note that data included in this report reflect amounts calculated based on the 2017 benefit year risk adjustment methodology established through notice with comment rulemaking (78 Fed. Reg. 15409 (Mar. 11, 2013), 79 Fed. Reg. 13743 (Mar. 11, 2014), 80 Fed. Reg. 10749 (Feb. 27, 2015), 81 Fed. Reg. 12204 (Mar. 8, 2016), 81 Fed. Reg. 94048 (Dec. 22, 2016), and 45 C.F.R. Part 153) and is provided for informational purposes. These amounts do not constitute specific obligations of Federal funds to any particular issuer or plan.

